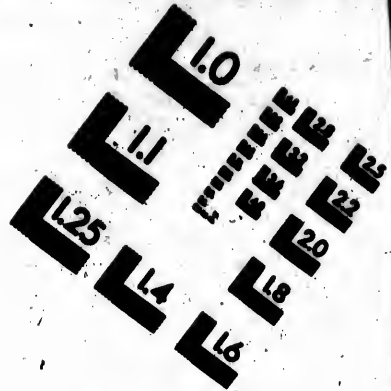
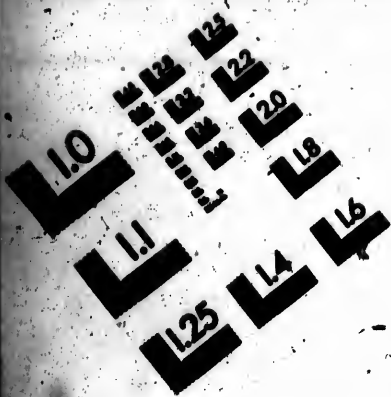




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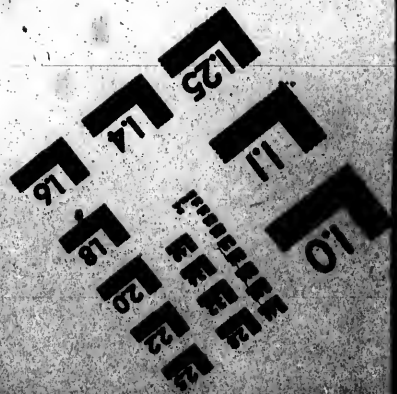
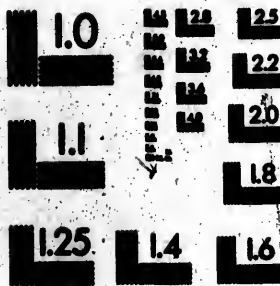
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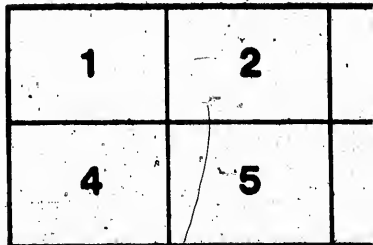
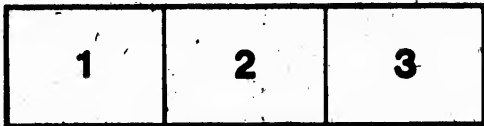
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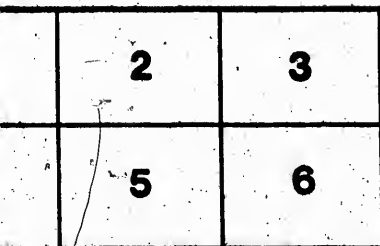
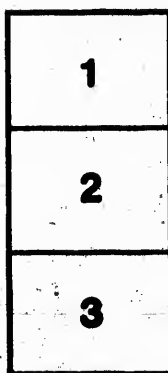
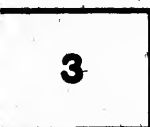
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BEING

# SERMONS

PREACHED ON

SEVERAL SABBATH EVENINGS IN 1869,

BY THE LATE

REV. W. T. MURDOCK,

MINISTER OF MELVILLE CHURCH, CALG:

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

## THE SERMON

PREACHED BY

REV. PRINCIPAL WILLIS,

ON THE LORD'S DAY AFTER THE FUNERAL.

TORONTO:

PRINTED BY A. DAVALL & CO., ST. JOHN'S STREET.

**THE GOSPEL OF GRACE VINDICATED :**

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**SERMONS**

**PREACHED ON**

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**TORONTO:**

**PRINTED BY A. LOVELL & Co., 67 YONGE STREET.**

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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The very natural desire of a flock, suddenly bereaved of its Pastor, to have some memorial of his pulpit labours, suggested this publication. The members of Melville Church and many others had listened to a series of Evening Discourses on important doctrinal subjects, of which it was known that notes were preserved among the papers of the deceased.—In compliance with an expressed wish, and after consulting with clerical friends of the departed, and my own, I undertook to pass these sermons, and parts of sermons, through the press, under my own supervision. It must be regretted that one or two are somewhat fragmentary; and we hesitated as to printing these. Yet it was thought on the whole that any such remains by which they can recall the method and manner of a loved friend and preacher, will not be regarded with the less interest by expectant readers, when left to be perused with all the signs of naturalness, even in those abrupt and elliptical passages.

The suggestion, that the publication should include the very effective speech delivered by Mr. Murdoch at Hamilton, has been acted on.

I have at the request of my esteemed friends in Galt, allowed the publication, at same time, of my own discourse. It is here in substance as delivered, with the addition of a few sentences omitted in the delivery.

I have great pleasure in including the hearty tribute to his memory of two of Mr. Murdoch's fellow labourers, whose interest in the deceased is so highly creditable to their Christian liberality as well as zeal for the common truth.

M. W.

Knox' College, March, 1870.

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## TESTIMONY TO THE DECEASED:

BY THE REV. MENERS. ACHESON AND MUIR, OF GALT.

Having learned, with great pleasure, that the Session of Melville Church, Galt, were about to publish a number of the last Sabbath evening lectures, delivered by their late pastor, Rev. W. T. Murdoch, on the distinctive doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith,—technically called "The Five points of Calvinism," we readily embrace the opportunity of inserting therewith a short statement of our respect for the character and memory of our departed brother in the Gospel.

We confine our remarks specially to the last sixteen or eighteen months of Mr. Murdoch's life, during which time we were closely allied with him in united meetings for the proclamation and defence of the Doctrinal Standards of our common Presbyterianism.

The circumstances which brought us together for this object are well known, not only to the people of Galt and vicinity, but also to the Synod of the Canada Presbyterian Church. All we would here say is, that these doctrines had been rudely assailed in this locality, and views opposed to them earnestly propagated to the misleading of the less informed, and to the causing just offence to those long established in the faith. In these united efforts with our late respected brother, which we have every good reason to believe were largely blessed of God to many, we found Mr. Murdoch an able, faithful, and earnest advocate of the truth.

He brought to his work a clear head, a warm heart, and a tender conscience. When, after careful investigation, he had formed his convictions of truth and duty, he was steadfast—immoveable.

He had an utter abhorrence of anything like tampering with truth, for the sake of either popularizing himself or the church of his choice. Without fear or favour, he proclaimed the whole counsel of God. As a personal friend he was gentle, faithful, and true; and in all our correspondence

with him as a minister, we have ever found him honest and practical in all his engagements.

He has left behind him a faithful testimony to valuable Scripture doctrine, which we hope and pray may be blessed not only to the congregation which enjoyed his ministry, but also to many others.

In these Lectures, which are now to be published as a memorial of his ability and faithfulness, he though dead, still speaks, for the edification, comfort, and establishment of many in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**ROBERT ACHESON,**

Minister of the United Presbyterian Church,

Galt, Ont.

U. P. Manor, Galt, March, 1870.

I heartily endorse the above statement of my esteemed brother in the Gospel, in reference to the abilities and personal character of the late Rev. W. T. Murdoch. As an evidence of the deep respect in which Mr. Murdoch was held by the public generally, we have only to revert to the large numbers who attended the funeral services held on the Sabbath following his interment, not only in Melville church, but also in St. Andrew's church, where, according to arrangement with the Rev. Mr. Acheson, I held a special service in the evening to improve his lamented death. The vast congregation assembled, and the deep feeling and interest manifested during the services, evinced more strongly than words can express, the place which our departed brother held in the esteem of all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and the profit of listening to his clear expositions of divine truth.

We are glad to know that arrangements are being made to give to the public some of his last pulpit discourses. Though we had not the pleasure of hearing them delivered, we have every confidence that they will do credit to the head and heart of the author, and also to the Church of which he was a minister.

**J. B. MUIR, M.A.,**

Minister, Church of Scotland, Galt.

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## DISCOURSE I.

*Ephes. I. 4.—According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.*

I wish, at the very outset to state my reasons for beginning a series of discourses on the distinctive doctrines of our church, as different from those held by Arminians. It is not for controversy, not to create or to continue anything like dispute and division. The community amongst which we live are professedly, by a great majority, Calvinists, tho' I am persuaded a large proportion of our people do not really understand what Calvinism is.

I speak, of course, only of my own congregation, tho' the remark will apply, I am persuaded, equally to others, that in this busy, bustling, worldly age, by the absence of that catechetical instruction which in days of yore was the glory and strength of our church, many, very many, of our people are not only unable to defend our principles when assailed, but also do not see when they are assailed; and while I hope none hearing me entertain wrong views, I cannot but think many of you have in regard to our distinctive doctrines no positive convictions at all: they are things regarding which you entertain no particular belief whatever. To implant that conviction, to lead you to see closely and hold most dear the faith once delivered to the Saints, to lead you to see with some measure of clearness the glory and beauty of that system of truth bequeathed to us by our martyred forefathers, which laid broad and deep the foundation of our Presbyterianism, is the task that with all humility, and looking to God for His blessing, we now propose. And, while from some points of view, I do shrink from the task, as the subjects we shall deal with are of the greatest moment, and require wisdom and knowledge in him that would accomplish them; I consider it my highest privilege to be permitted to do what in me lies, to unfold that system of truth which sees Jehovah on the throne of the universe, and

according to His will in heaven and on earth; which resembles the words of the inspired Psalmist, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth be glad, let the multitude of the isles rejoice thereat;" which sees Him as one to whom known are all His works from the beginning to the end, not changing in His purposes nor baffled in his designs, but working out his gracious purposes towards the sons of men "according to the good pleasure of his will"; and which in the past, as we believe it will be in the future, has been honored and owned by God, as His true Evangel, true gospel to a lost and ruined world.

It may be said, nay by unthinking people it is said, what is the use of these doctrines, what good can it effect to try to establish them? why not concentrate your energies on the gospel call, and forgetting all else, urge men to believe and be saved? God forbid that I should undervalue or make little of the invitations of the gospel, or forget that I am here an ambassador for Christ to plead with you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God; but I cannot see how the gospel call can be urged with reasonable hope of success, if not alongside of gospel truth. The Apostle Paul was not surely trifling with the eternal interests of the Romans when he wrote to them this elaborate epistle; he was as anxious for their salvation as ever man could be, and yet the great bulk of his epistle is occupied with the statement and unfolding of doctrinal truth.

It is a thing on which I can scarcely trust myself to speak, so humiliating is it, to defend doctrinal preaching, and to shew that there is no opposition between it and practical exhortation—why, there can be no practical appeal without a basis on which to rest: I call on you to pursue some line of conduct, if I am not mocking you I must shew you—why? I urge and implore you to believe; if I would not mock you I must explain to you what you are to believe, &c.

If this were a fitting place, and time, I might now give you a short account of the standards of our church. The Reformation from popery was completed in Scotland in 1560, when the first general assembly of the church was held. It was needful to define in some manner what the



principles and doctrines of the church were. The first book of discipline issued by John Knox contained the germs of the doctrines we now hold, just as the standards of the Church of England framed nearly at the same time were, and are to this time, decidedly Calvinistic. In 1642, during the protectorate of Cromwell, the idea was formed of a national church which should embrace both kingdoms; and to draw up the principles of this church, an Assembly was convened at Westminster, composed of men of all shades of opinion, which after several years continued labour, issued a Confession of Faith, a larger and shorter Catechism, which the English Lords and Commons ratified and accepted, and also the General Assembly and Parliament of Scotland.

These are the Standards of our church. They are called usually Calvinistic, inasmuch as they agree largely with the views of Calvin, though their authority in no degree or measure depends upon him, but upon what we most verily hold, their entire agreement with the word of God. They were drawn up, at a time when the church was distracted with Arminian errors, errors which were considered and condemned by the Synod of Dort thirty years earlier, and accordingly very distinctly state the faith of the church on the five points of doctrine involved in that controversy:—These points are (1) Predestination, (2) Atonement, (3) Man's inability to believe of himself, (4) The influence of the Holy Spirit in effectual calling, or invincible grace, and (5) Perseverance of the Saints. I propose to state, explain and defend the orthodox sentiment on each of these points as simply, briefly, and clearly as I can.

First, Predestination. The doctrine in its wider aspects involves God's eternal and unchangeable purpose regarding all events, taking in every actual occurrence that ever took place.

Here is the confession:

"God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass, yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away but rather established."

I shall not enter upon this wide aspect of Predestination, though it includes the whole question, and can be clearly proved from reason as well as revelation. The point around which the Arminian controversy as to predestination revolves is the connexion between the decree of God and the salvation of man ; in other words, what is the decree purpose or election which God in eternity decreed regarding such as are saved ? Our doctrine is this—

“Those of mankind who are predestinated unto life, God before the foundation of the world was laid (Read Conf.)

The Arminian doctrine is—

God from all eternity determined to bestow salvation on those who He foresaw should persevere unto the end in their faith in Christ Jesus, and to inflict everlasting punishment on those who should continue in their unbelief and resist unto the end His divine succors.

The two systems diverge and differ on this point ; both admit and claim an eternal purpose on the part of God towards his people. The reason why God chooses one and leaves another is, says the Arminian, the foreseen faith and perseverance. According to our theory these are not the cause but the effect—something bestowed—and the only reason Scripture gives is, “The good pleasure of his will to the praise of the glory of His grace.”

The one theory makes the grace of God dependent on something in the sinner that makes him to differ—for what matters if whether it be good works seen or foreseen ? the other gives to God all the glory, and attributes faith and everything else to the wonderful love of Him, who according to His mercy chose us not because we were holy or foreseen to be holy, but that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Before quoting Scripture proof—appeal to reason—is salvation God's work—conversion, &c. ; we ask—then when did God resolve to do it ? Oh, who without impiety would dare to say it is something he did not always mean to do ? in other words, just admit and hold our doctrine.

Scripture proof. Rom. 9 : 23. (Read and explain).

Acts 13 : 48. " "

2 Thes. 2 : 13. " "

Titus 3 : 5. " "

\* \* \* \* \*

Leaving the statement of objections and improvement to next Sabbath, I would conclude with one or two remarks of a general kind bearing on our present topic.

I could not express too strongly my conviction as to the importance of every one thoroughly understanding and holding the doctrine of God's electing love, as so clearly revealed in these portions of Scripture. It is no mere theory involving no practical results with which we here deal; your ideas of *what God is* determines the whole structure and tone of your piety; and that system of truth, that interpretation of Scripture, which elevates [God, which makes Him not like to us, but "dwelling in light inaccessible and full of glory," which makes its chief end His glory, and our well-being subordinate thereto, ought to commend itself at once to the adoring reception of all who love God.

Difficulties there are beyond doubt in this view of truth; for who can by searching find out God? the nature and degree of these difficulties I shall try in my next lecture to state and remove—only this I may say that they are difficulties less in degree and different in kind from those that belong to any other theory, and their influence on the pious mind is not to bewilder but to humble and call forth as it did from Paul the exclamation "Oh the depths! &c."

## DISCOURSE II.

*Rom. ix. 15.—For as saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.*

In my last Lecture, which was merely of an introductory nature, and in which I stated rather than discussed the doctrine of God's decree as to human salvation—you will remember I stated the point of difference between us and Arminians, between the doctrine on this point professed and held by the Presbyterian Church, and professed in the standards of the Church of England, and that held by Methodists, Moravianians, and all others who hold to Arminian tenets: Our doctrine being that God, from all eternity, in the exercise of free grace, sovereignty, for reasons known only to Himself, but not for anything in the creature, chose a certain number of sinners, elected them to everlasting life: The Arminian view, that God elected such as He foresaw would believe—this election, in other words, depends on their believing; on ours, election precedes and gives us faith. Salvation in their view, depends on the sinner himself—in our view, it depends on God; they hold that God must see or foresee some good qualities in the sinner before He can elect him to life; we hold that God can see no good in the sinner except what he determined beforehand to bestow—in other words I shall endeavour to-night to demonstrate, the one is salvation by grace, the other by works.

I wish to give you the arguments for the doctrine in as condensed a form as possible. The doctrine in which we hold the glory of God is deeply concerned, and which I am to prove is, the eternal unconditional election or choice by God of his people to eternal life altogether irrespective of anything good in them seen or foreseen, but embracing in its provisions faith, holiness, and every grace.

First, let us argue from reason—suppose the Scriptures had not, as we hold they have, clearly revealed it, still from reason we could arrive at the conclusion before us. I

shall assume these fundamental truths—all mankind are sinners—as sinners liable to eternal perdition—out of mankind a portion are saved and a portion lost: no person that believes the bible at all will surely question these things. Then I ask, how comes it to pass that some are saved while others perish? Whence is it that out of the human family one class is taken and another left? We stand looking on a great fact, an undeniable issue, and we ask the reason of the fact. Because, says the Arminian, the one believed and the other refused: granted, but that is only putting the difficulty a step back. How was it that the one believed and the other not? Was it that the one was better than the other, was more prudent, more trusting, less wicked? No, says the Arminian, now pressed into a corner, and just answering substantially in the same way—Man is a free agent, and in the exercise of his freedom of will he can either choose or refuse. Well, we still press him—if one man in the exercise of his free will (which you seem to think is beyond even God's control—a heresy we shall afterwards expose) if one chooses and another makes light of it—there must be in the one something better, some disposing influence which the other lacks.

If then we cannot take the ground to account for the difference of reception given to the gospel call, that it arises from less depravity in some than others—and few we think would affirm that—all admit that every man is enmity against God—then the reason for some receiving and some rejecting must lie out of themselves, must be the operation of the Spirit of God; but if this operation is common to all, if with equal power the Spirit works on each soul, that cannot account for it either: equal power acting against equal resistance—the same influence bearing on men equally dead in sin, would produce the same effect in all, and on this supposition either all would believe and be saved or all refuse and be lost.

Reasoning then from the effect back to the cause, taking the undeniable fact of a difference in effect being produced on sinners, and that difference not arising from anything in themselves, nor from any influences of the Spirit they in common enjoy, we are forced to the conclusion, there is no



escape from it, that it is produced by what God does for some and withholds from others—something therefore he always intended to do, for known unto the Lord are all his works from the beginning of the world; in other words we must believe his predestinating and electing purpose towards a portion of fallen men.

Although I am assuming what will form the subject of a future Lecture\* on efficacious grace—that conversion is God's work, that God seeks the sinner before the sinner seeks God; if it were otherwise the election would just be reversed, God would be the sinner's elect, and not the sinner God's—although I do not enter into the discussion of this now, but assume its truth—I am anxious to press this line of argument, because it carries to my own mind irresistible proof, is a natural and to us a seemly mode of procedure to take what God does, and say He always intended to do it, to reason from the thing done that God must have had a purpose to do it; and is also a mode of presenting the doctrine, which surely requires the absence of all Christian humility to gainsay or deny it.

Are you a believer? Have you experienced that regenerating change which constitutes us new creatures? Then, who converted you, yourself or some fellow creature? Dare you think or say either of these? No, it was God in his grace revealing his Son in you. Admit that, admit that your new birth was God's work, and the question is settled—you admit election, and of course eternal election, for without impiety we cannot deny that whatever God does in time he purposed to do so from eternity—there can be no issue which he did not foresee causing him to alter his purpose.

Oh it is because man's proud heart is unwilling to be humbled into the dust of sin and helplessness, unwilling to be entirely dependent upon God for all—that they cavil at and resist His sovereignty, invent the delusive theory of foreseen faith as a ground of choice—a theory utterly destructive of salvation by grace, and robbing God of that glory due to His name!

But (2) the doctrine of election is clearly deducible from this that every where, in terms of the strongest kind, salvation

\* The notes of the Lecture here referred to have not been found.

is attributed to the free grace of God. Need I quote Scripture to prove this latter doctrine, "by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God;" we are "justified freely by His grace"—"we are chosen to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Now what is grace?—mercy, something given us for which we have no claim, which God may withhold or give according to His pleasure.

It was an act of grace on the part of God to provide a Saviour at all. He might justly have passed over the human race, and left them to perish, as He did to the fallen angels. He might choose none, few, many, or them all, as seemed good in His sight. As Judge He could condemn all, for all had sinned and come short of His glory. As Sovereign He could forgive and save whom He would. True, this is denied: the great and surely good John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist churches, and whose sermons mould their theological views, denies this; he says, "I deny that God might justly have passed by me and all men. I reject it as a precarious assertion utterly unsupported by Holy Scripture." If so, then God was bound to provide salvation for all; John Wesley's God would have been unjust had he not provided the means of salvation and put them within his reach. Well, if so, there is no grace in the matter; there can be no grace in bestowing what could not justly be withheld: it is simple justice, which God must bestow; and Paul should have written instead of grace, justice—"the justities of God hath appeared." It is another gospel which is not another.

But, to come to the point more immediately in hand. Suppose in an assembly of one hundred people, under the preaching of the gospel, fifty are awakened and converted, while fifty remain untouched and go on in unbelief to eternal ruin. Did God have towards each of the fifty the same purpose? Assuredly not. On what account was His purpose different towards the one party as compared with the other? If it was something in himself which he has not revealed, "the good pleasure of his will," then their conversion was "that the purpose of God according to election might stand." It was an act of pure *grace*; but if his pur-



poss was conditioned by and arising out of foreseen good qualities in the one more than in the other, then, beyond all controversy, what determined the difference was not grace at all, but the faith of the saved fifty: their faith viewed not as a grace bestowed but as a work performed; for its being foreseen determines the purpose. Surely no man in his senses would call that salvation by grace; no, it is not grace that determines the matter at all, but the faith of the individual preceding and deserving the grace, if there can be such a thing as *deserving grace*. If, I repeat, we are saved by grace, in any intelligible sense, it is by an undeserved act of mercy, which act being ever present in the Divine mind is nothing more and nothing less than God's eternal decree of personal election.

But does the word of God expressly teach what we affirm? "To the law and to the testimony" must ever be the ultimate resort; we think it does, and so clearly that we marvel any could fail to find it. Not to bewilder you with a long list of passages in proof, and many might be quoted, let us just turn together to the 9th chapter of Romans. Look at the chapter. It opens with a very strong expression of regret on the part of the Apostle over the obduracy and blindness of his fellow Jews, his kinsmen according to the flesh, that so many of them rejected salvation. The distinction of, which he is speaking, and which I wish you clearly to bear in mind, as it will come up again, is not between Jew and Gentile, not an election of the Jewish nation to the exclusion of the Gentiles, but an election of a number of Jews to the exclusion of another number—and how is this? He gives in verse 6th the principle of solution, "not as though the word of God has taken none effect," that is, not because the promise to Abraham has failed in any of its intended issues; whoever was included (it is of individuals he is speaking) shall get the promise—"they are not all Israel who are of Israel," not every individual descending from Abraham by natural descent are children of the promise. That was seen in Isaac and Ishmael—and more clearly in v. 11—Jacob and Esau—not that God viewed both as innocent, but both equally sinful, both in virtue of Adam's fall corrupt and guilty and deserving nothing.

There was nothing in Jacob that called for God's favor more than in Esau : they were children of one mother, at one birth, and the declaration selecting the one and passing by the other was made previous to their being born, and could not therefore have been founded on any trait of character in either, but was resolvable, in the clear language of the 11th verse, into nothing but the sovereign pleasure of God—“that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth.”

How clear is this language : how can any one willing to be taught out of God's word fail to see here the whole matter ! One elected, the other left, that election not resting on works but on the sovereign purpose of God. It is mere trifling to tell us that it was on account of foreseen good works ; there could have been in the circumstances no works but foreseen ones, and when works are expressly excluded it must mean foreseen works.

The objection which the Apostle supposes may be put clearly shows us what his meaning is. Had the election spoken of rested on any good qualities seen or foreseen, there would be no meaning in and no call for the supposed question which an objector would raise : “Is there unrighteousness with God ?” Just the objection that is still put, which we constantly meet—is it right for God to take one and leave another ? And how does he answer this ? Does he say, as some people would say,—“Oh no, God gives every one equal advantages, the same means of grace ; and it rests with themselves entirely—he chose Jacob because He saw he would persevere in obedience.” ? No, my friends, he says nothing of the kind, but claims for God the prerogative of choosing out of a lost world such as he shall bless, solely and entirely according to his sovereign will.—“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” The quotation is from Exodus, describing God's words to Moses as to how he would treat the Israelites, all of whom had committed idolatry, and therefore were liable to God's righteous judgments ; and the meaning is, just as God claimed there to slay for their sin a certain number, and to be merciful to the rest as an act of sovereign will ; so does he claim to

deal with all mankind sinners; all deserving to perish, he chooses those on whom he will have mercy.

And here, my friends, we might pause. The person who in the face of the unmistakable teaching of these verses still cavils and disputes must be utterly impervious to all teaching. "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, but of God who sheweth mercy." It is not man's believing or working, or persevering in these, that is the determining first cause of salvation: there is believing, and willing, and working, it is true; but they are are things subsequent to and arising out of God's sovereign will—"God that sheweth mercy."

The same principle is further illustrated in the case of Pharaoh, whom it is asserted God "raised up," that is assigned him a station and a place in which his innate wickedness would display itself, and where he would serve to manifest the Almighty power of God. Many are staggered at the apparent teaching of these two verses, as if they taught that God actually infuses evil into men's hearts, positively by direct dealing hardens their hearts. A little reflection, however, will shew this in its proper light. God is never said to harden a heart that is soft, but only such as are already hard; and the true meaning is, that he leaves such wicked persons to act out their evil propensities, and places them in circumstances where they infamously become harder. So with Pharaoh, when God said "I will harden, &c.," it is said as the fulfilment of this, "Pharaoh hardened his heart, &c."

Now, asks an objector—and it is the very objection that I hear in these days—"If that be so, if God's purpose always stands, and his will towards his creatures always executed," why doth he yet find fault—why punish men for not being what He hath determined they shall not be? Well, answers the inspired writer, If you begin to question God's right to distribute His favor as He will; if you deny him what each of you claims for himself, doing as you please with your own; my answer is, "Who art thou, oh man, that resistest against God, &c.?"

There is a point to which I have already alluded, but to which I would briefly, as a closing remark on these verses,

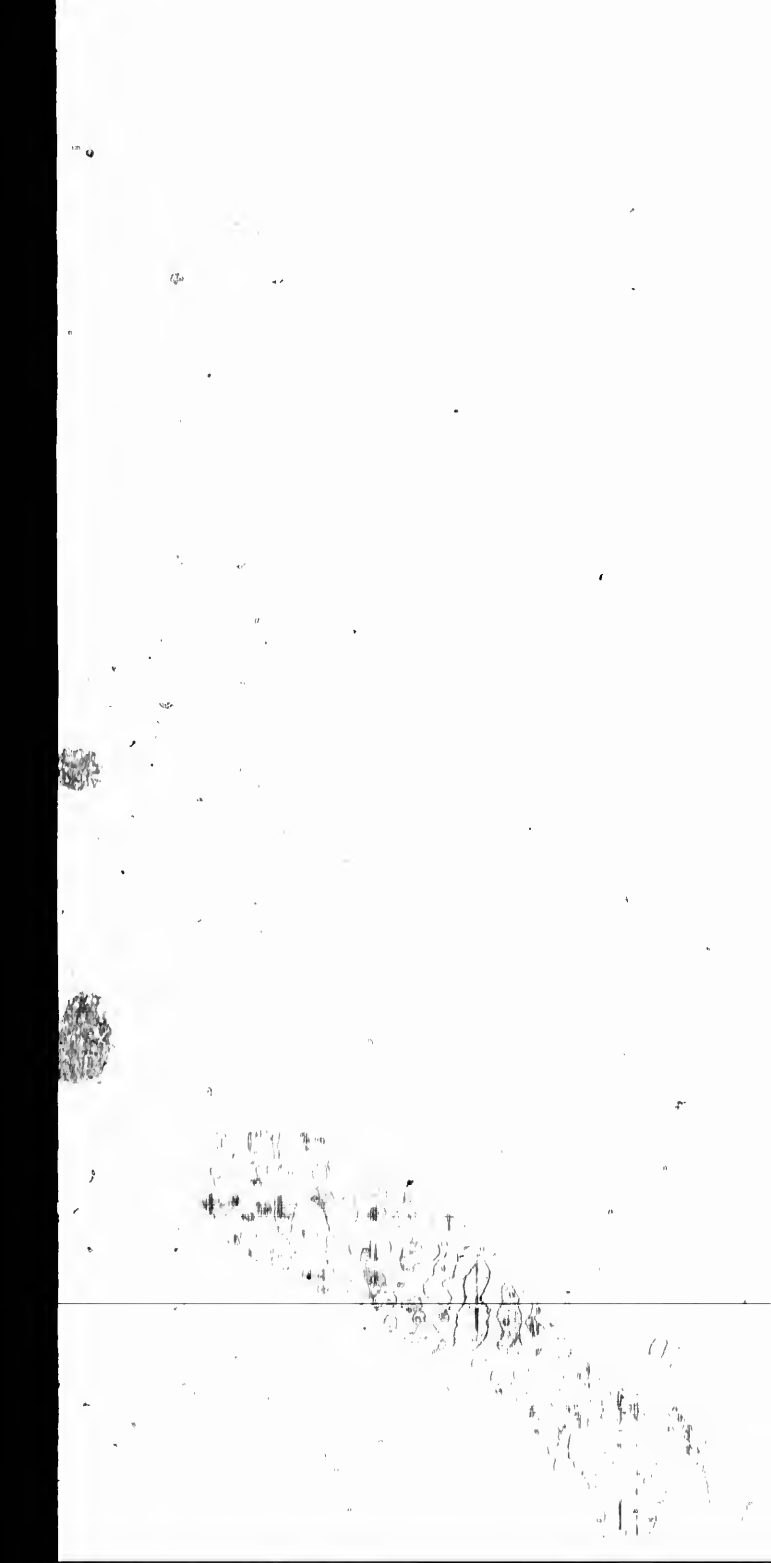
again return. It is this—In electing His people God viewed them as lost sinners. The coarse and impious language with which this truth is assailed—"Oh then God created some persons to be happy and some to be lost;" I say this has no force whatever, inasmuch as the lump out of which He selects His people is wholly corrupt already, and He hath the right to dispense His favor as He will.

I have dwelt at some length on these verses in order that you may all have on Divine authority at least one passage of Scripture to which at all times you can refer. It is probably the clearest portion of the Bible bearing on the point, so clear that, as Spurgeon says, "Till Arminians get this chapter erased out of the bible, they can never overturn the doctrine of God's electing love."

I do not need, my Christian friends, to adduce further Scripture proof and illustration. What we have advanced puts clearly, I think, beyond doubt these truths: God from eternity chose His people, elected them from before the foundation of the world, not because of good he foresaw in them, not for a holiness they possessed, but to holiness—that they should be holy and without blame before him in love; not for faith foreseen, for there could be no faith independent of His gracious purpose to bestow it; "faith is the gift of God." Men are not chosen because they believe, but they believe because they are chosen; the simple and only reason of His choice being His own good pleasure; so that as we see different effects produced by the gospel, we can understand our Lord's meaning, "I thank thee, oh Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

#### OBJECTIONS.

(1) This makes God partial and therefore unjust. I have already stated the false ground on which this rests: it is just the old objection: "Is there unrighteousness with God?" If you have twenty debtors from whom you can exact payment, is it any injustice to ten of them if you freely forgive the other ten? Your forgiving the debt of one party does



not alter or make any worse the condition of the other. And may not God do this to His sinful and condemned creatures? Is he partial and unjust in passing over the angels that fell, and choosing man as an object of mercy? Is he partial and unjust in bestowing life upon whomsoever He will?

Nay, to show the absurdity of this objection and the inconsistency of those who make it; you have a wayward child, a son, who is profligate and wicked; you are an Arminian or a Morisonian—are you kept from praying to God to save your child, to melt his heart, to turn him from the error of his ways? your creed forbids you doing it. You say, for God to give to one what He withholds from another is wrong: thousands of profligate children have perished and are perishing; your cold, heartless creed, if you will act up to it, seals your lips; you would be asking God to do what is wrong—oh surely there is something wrong, and something insincere and grossly inconsistent which leads you to reject the doctrine of election on grounds which in your every prayer you yourself act out!

Was it wrong for God to confine the knowledge of the way of life for one thousand of years to a small nation of Jews and leave all the world in darkness—to do mighty miracles in Bethsaida, and Chorazin rather than in Tyre and Zidon—to give us the gospel and leave heathen lands in gross darkness; wrong to convert this child and leave the father in his sins; to save this parent and permit the child to go on in wickedness? These things God hath done, these things God is doing. Do you question the rectitude of them? They involve the same principle as election. Dark surely is the ignorance, impious beyond all measure the blasphemy, which would charge the God of all grace, in electing his own to eternal life, with partiality and wrong doing!

(2) It renders our own exertion unnecessary and useless.  
"If I am elected I am safe do what I may, if I am not elected I am lost, do what I will."

Well, let us apply this rule to other matters—your friend, your wife, your child, lies low in dangerous sickness, if you are not an Atheist, a believer in fate or chance, you exhort-



ledge that the life is at God's disposal, that whether he recover or whether he die depends upon the will of God:—If he dies, even an Arminian would say, the will of the Lord be done. Well, do you reason thus? The thing is fixed in the mind of God: if he is to die it must be so, do what I will; if he is to live it shall be though I do nothing. Ah, my friends, you would not do that; while willing to bow to the Divine will *when shown*, you would use every means and every appliance, and combine with it all prayer to prevail with God for mercy.

but I take a Scriptural case—Paul and his fellow passengers. He has a revelation of the safety of all—yet he says, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. Acts xxvii.

Very wonderful that the objection is used only in the very matter in which the connection between means and ends is certain! I may get medicine from the physician, but I cannot be sure of recovery; I may labour, plow and sow, but possibly no harvest; but sure as the promise of an unchangeable God can make it, if I use the means of grace I shall obtain; “Ask and ye shall receive, &c.”

Instead of paralyzing effort, without it there could be no effort; What are invitations to *me*? I cannot obey; but God has chosen to save some in connection with the use of the means of grace—ah that is different, then I may seek; per-adventure I may be amongst them.

(3) Although true, it is useless or dangerous to preach it. That is a prevailing error which I hesitate not to characterize as at once unscriptural and unwise. It amounts to this, that sinners must not be told their helplessness lest we discourage them; that we become their enemy when we tell them the truth: Well, how is it in God's word? Take Christ's two great invitations—“All that the Father hath given unto me, &c.” “I thank Thee, oh Father, &c.” He, in the act of recognising sovereignty, freely invites. We cannot be far astray following such an example.

Many other objections: but let these suffice. The use of this doctrine, I have not time to-night to enter upon; they will come out however in our future lectures on the other points, for as I said, they form one *choix*, bound in-



separably together. This only may we say in conclusion, that the doctrine glorifies God, humbles the sinner, secures beyond all peradventure the salvation of his people—"The foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His."

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## DISCOURSE III.

*Math. xi. 25.—At that time Jesus answered and said I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: Even so, Father, for so it hath seemed good in thy sight—with v. 28. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

In my last lecture I endeavoured to demonstrate, from reason and scripture, the truth of the doctrine of God's electing love as understood and held by our church. I presented two arguments from reason—first shewing from the admitted fact of some being saved and some lost, to whom equally the word of God had come, and both being equally depraved, and so enmity against God—and second, from the clearly taught and much insisted on bible truth that salvation is of grace—that the ultimate reason or cause of salvation must be in God, his gracious purpose towards his redeemed. I gave you a rapid and hasty digest of the 9th chapter of the Romans, on this important and solemn truth, and succeeded, I hope, in shewing to every unprejudiced mind that beyond all controversy the doctrine we deal with is there fully laid down and illustrated.

I drew your attention to one or two of the prevailing objections against election; that it made God partial, that it paralyzed human effort, and even tho' true it was wiser to let it alone: To each of these I brought in reply such arguments and illustrations as, I trust, removed from your mind the idea that they were of any weight.

It would, however, be utterly inexcusable and cruel were I to leave the matter as a mere conclusion, to which your intelligence must give consent, or content myself with the mere demonstration of its truthfulness from the word of God; it may justly be expected that I should, having essayed the task at all, do what I can to remove the difficulties and darkness which bewilder and trouble the mind of many in their contemplation of this truth.

Far be it from me to make light of these difficulties—

many of us who now rest calmly in this faith, know how bitter and trying these have been to ourselves—far from me to speak in language harsh and dictatorial on such a theme: oh, rather for a baptism of the spirit of Paul; when he says, “I was gentle among you, as a nurse cherisheth her children,” or better still that of him “who breaks not the bruised reed nor quenches the smoking flax!”

I would say here, at the outset, that on such a subject, which looks to the counsels of the Infinite as its study, we cannot but expect “things higher than we can attain to,” “Who can by searching find out God? who can find out the Almighty unto perfection, &c.?” and that our anxiety to scrutinise the mysterious theme may end in our finding ourselves, as Milton says, “in wandering mazes lost:”—only this, that our received doctrine is beset with fewer difficulties than any other theory which would not rob God even of foreknowledge; and that the very incomprehensibility of the theme serves to promote its object,—the humbling so of man before God, “of whom and to whom are all things,” that no flesh should glory in his presence.”

What I wish this evening to do, so far as I may be enabled, is, to look a little more closely than we have done to the objections and difficulties which are raised against the doctrine; and for purposes of clearness I shall look at these as they relate first to the Gospel invitation to the sinner, and second to the life of obedience and holiness of the believer.

I. Difficulties connected with the universal gospel invitations.

It is said “how can God honestly and sincerely call on the sinner to repent and believe the gospel, when by a secret irreverable decree he has made certain that the grace necessary for obedience to the call shall not be granted? how give a universal invitation if there be a limited design?” I state again that we must tread softly the ground on which we now stand: the difficulty I mention is a real one; that is, many honest sincere minds are troubled therewith, and God forbid that I should, by any flippancy of language, or unfeelingness of sentiment, make light of the matter. No! let us calmly and with humbleness of mind see how far, and to what extent, we can remove it.

Were I dealing with an Arminian, throwing this in our face, and challenging us, as they do, to solve it, we would to *him* reply; the difficulty is equally great on your own theory. God most certainly knows whether one will accept or reject the offer—the rejection involves inconceivable guilt of which he would have been free had he never got the offer; why does a gracious and merciful God, knowing what the result must be, ply with invitation and threatening some of his creatures, who, he infallibly knows, will scorn them all and bring on themselves the greater condemnation? Were we, I say, dealing with the subject in that way, we could readily silence the adversary; but that to-night is not my object; it is one thing to repel all attack from without, another, and a different thing, to secure unity within; one thing to shew the absurdity of *any other* theory, and another to remove the difficulties connected with our own.

We are not left, my friends, to reason out the congruity, the consistency of a fixed purpose on the part of God, and a free offer of mercy to all; we have it in the text, a *fact*, from the lips of the great teacher who did not see that any stumbling block was thrown in the path of inviting love where it was preceded by, and accompanied with, the strongest averment as to God's sovereign dealing.

He would be a bold man, and a rash one, who, on such a subject, would gainsay the authority, or despise the example of Jesus Christ our Lord. He surely was in earnest, he surely would utter no syllable at variance with truth, or fitted in the remotest degree to discourage the sinner from seeking salvation. When we find as here, the sovereignty of God declared, and in the same breath the inviting love, we are warranted not only to think that no contradiction exists between these things, but that the one forms *one* of the grounds of confidence on which the other—the invitation—is pressed. I repeat it, that if we are to be guided by the teaching of the Saviour, and to follow his example in dealing with sinners, the doctrine of God's sovereign choice, election, far from being kept in the back ground, or dissociated from the gospel offer—should precede and form the ground and reason for the offer.

There can be no controversy as to Christ's meaning. He

plainly and expressly ascribes to the Father, the bestowing or the withholding of that knowledge which can save the soul, the reason why God reveals to one and hides from another, "even so Father for so it seemeth good in thy sight." Nay, more, he blesses God that it is so; he does not merely, as some, admit the truth, but he rejoiceth in it, and says in so many words, I delight in this arrangement, I thank thee that while in righteous sovereignty thou withholdest the light from some, leaving them to reap the consequences of their own pride and unbelief, there is no hindrance to invite each burdened one and to assure each sincere and humble seeker—of acceptance. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden." Whatever, therefore, my friends, be our inability to see in all its clearness the principle of reconciliation between these things, the sovereign purpose and the free offer, there is not, there cannot be between them any contradiction; nay more, the fact that it is God's purpose to save some, that he is constantly doing it, arms us with renewed confidence in calling upon men to believe.

It was so with Paul when he had laboured for a time in Corinth (Acts 18th) and seemed to be making no impression on the heathen population, when he was losing heart in the work and about to give way to despondency: God appeared to him in a vision, and encouraged him to go on in his preaching of the gospel, telling him, you must not forsake your post; do not be disheartened: "I have much people in this city"—and did the fact of God's announcing that he had selected those whom he would save hamper or enfeeble the Apostle's preaching of the word? Nay, that strengthened him, and he continued for a year and six months to preach the gospel to the church at Corinth.

I take decided and strong ground on this point: were there no election according to grace, did I not believe that I could not preach the gospel at all. If it is not the fixed and unchangeable purpose of God to convert some sinners by the preaching of the cross, then none shall be converted: instead of the doctrine of election fettering me in calling on men to believe, it is my chief confidence; if no election, no salvation; if no purpose of God to save, what avails my



preaching? but, blessed be his name, He has a purpose; and with the *Master* we thank God for it; and feel encouraged to say in his name to our fellow sinners "come unto me."

I am taking much stronger ground than many would do, who agree with me in the doctrine of election itself—and I trust I may not be betrayed into any expressions which might reflect injuriously on those, who, holding as strongly as I do the thing itself, would not associate it, as I am doing, with the gospel invitation. I venture to say that in my opinion these Calvinistic brethren are wrong: that when they use a policy, by silence or otherwise, which seems to cover up, hide, and conceal this or any other truth because offensive to carnal prejudice; such policy has a direct tendency to generate doubts in the minds of others as to the thing itself, and is, we think, a withholding from God, in a work in which He alone can effectually apply it, the honor and glory due to His name.

I was very much struck with a remark I met with in a book I was lately reading, "Pastoral Sketches by Spencer." "Many will not quarrel with what God does, but will not permit him to have any plan beforehand." For example, you find no fault with my saying, God converted you, it was his work—but you rebel and scruple to receive "God always intended to do it." Oh, my friends, unless we are prepared to launch forth on a sea of utter uncertainty, to rob the Deity of all plan and foresight, to deny Him what we claim for ourselves, *previous thought* before action, then to my mind it is clear as the noonday sun, strong and impregnable as Divine truth can make it, that known unto God are all His works; that His purpose shall stand. He will do all his pleasure. To remove in some measure the difficulties—consider—(a) His secret purpose is no rule of duty to us, "God's decrees are consistent with your freedom." (b) He has not revealed who are elect. What reason can you give for thinking you are not among them? wicked Manasseh—profligate Magdalene—self-righteous Paul.

II. Difficulties connected with the obedience of the believer.





## DISCOURSE IV.

*Ephes. v. 2.—And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.*

No event in the world's history can approach in its greatness and wonder that event which Calvary saw when the Son of God laid down his life. The advent, the incarnation of the eternal one—the life on earth in a form of a servant of the Almighty, His sufferings, His death, are themes into which the angels desire to look, and in contemplating which in all their vastness, we feel "what can we know!" The subject to which, this evening, I am to direct your attention is the atoning work of Jesus Christ, especially as to its extent; in other words, *for whom*, in whose behalf was it that He gave himself an offering and a sacrifice unto God; and without any preface, I would briefly look at the nature of the atonement, what was it? and then endeavour to elucidate the further point of its extent.

I. ITS NATURE.—The work of Christ was twofold, corresponding to the twofold need of man,—to obey the law and to suffer its penalty—or, as technically stated, his active and his passive obedience. True, some deny altogether the former, and teach that the obedience Christ gave to the law, in his life, was nothing more or less than a life of perfect holiness designed to shew us an example according to which we ought to live. In this, as in a great many other things, the heresy is not a falsehood but a half truth: It is true, he is an example, but that is only part of the truth; he magnified the law and made it honourable: he obeyed it for us, so that while by his death he frees his people from the penalty of the law by bearing it in their stead, he entitles them to the rewards of the law by fulfilling all its demands and meeting all its requirements.

It is, however, with the atonement we have now to deal. What is it? A mere example, says the Socinian, in which

Christ sealed the truth of his teaching by his death, to show us how we, too, should be willing to die for truth's sake. In this there is a little truth, but oh, how little! that the blessed Redeemer died simply to show he was a true man, and was faithful: How little this accords with scripture teaching, which clusters around his dying all that is valuable in christian faith and hope; which tells us that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and that his blood—the outpouring of his life as a sacrifice—cleanseth from all sin!

It was, says another class, and these professedly christians, the display to the universe, and to us, of God's hatred of sin: That to shew to us that sin is hateful in his sight and not easily passed by, He gave his own Son to suffer for it, not as a satisfaction to his justice or a propitiation for sinners, but a magnificent display of his holiness and vindication of his character, by which sinners might be led to penitence for their guilt, and be taught to fear transgressing his law. Against this theory we do not now dwell, preferring the stablishing you in the true view to dragging forth the false for exposure. It is sufficient to say it is entirely unscriptural, unworthy of a God of Justice, and is in its root and principle Socinian, as it makes salvation depend on our repentance and faith, not as graces bestowed, but works done.

The atonement of Christ was his substitution in the room and stead of sinners, in which the penalty of their sins was transferred to him, and he was treated and dealt with by God as bearing the sins of many. Not that he died merely through the sin and wickedness of men; not that he died to help them in some mysterious way; but as their surety, representative, and Head, the iniquity of us all was laid upon him, so that by his stripes we might be healed.

Correct views as to the nature of the atonement will infallibly, in my opinion, secure correct views as to its extent; for if our Saviour suffered the penalty due to others, then most assuredly under the government of a just God they themselves will not be called upon to suffer it. If his death was a true and proper propitiation for sinners—not for sin as some vainly speak, as if sin could exist apart from sinners—then we cannot but hold the inference is equally

that He, the Substitute, having died, they for whom he stood shall escape.

Does the Bible then teach this to have been the nature of his death? Most clearly, most emphatically, it does. He gave himself a sacrifice, what is that! Go back to Old Testament times and see. The priest leads a lamb to an altar, it is laid thereon, it is bound and anointed for death, and then confessing over it the sins of the people, laying his hands on it—symbolically transferring their sins to its head, yea, saying so in so many words, it becomes in figure their substitute and its death is offered as a substitute for their death. On no other theory could the transaction have any meaning; “the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sin,” but they were figures of Him that was to come, and taught the ancient worshipper that for sin to be forgiven blood must be shed, the penalty must be exacted; prefiguring and holding forth in symbol the Lamb of God, the Sacrifice that God would provide, which taketh away the sin of the world.

And how clear and definite is the language of the New Testament as to the substitutionary nature of the Saviour in his sufferings! “He was made sin for us, tho’ he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Surely that teaches that he endured our penalty, and we enjoy the imputation of his acquittal. He gave himself for us—that is, in our place; as he himself says, I lay down my life for the sheep; nay, even stronger than these, “he redeems us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:” beyond all dispute teaching us that in the covenant of redemption Christ became one under the curse of sin—not a sinner in the actual commission of it, for he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; but by imputation the sins of his people were laid upon him. The all sufficiency of the Redeemer’s offering arose mainly from these two considerations: First, the dignity of the sufferer, the Son of God; the divinity of his person gave infinite value to his woe, so that what all the groans and sighs of humankind could never have effected, what the death of all created existences could not have accomplished, the short struggle and soul desertion of Jesus gloriously

secured. Labaneth was not sufficient, but by one offering he hath forever perfected them that are sanctified: And, secondly, from the Divine appointment. It was the stipulated terms or condition of the covenant. "Therefore," says Jesus, "doth my father love me because I lay down my life for the sheep." "He came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him." Infinite in value tho' his sacrifice was, surpassing in intrinsic merit the utmost range of our imagination, had it not been appointed and assigned it could not have availed to save the lost. But being the Lamb of God, finishing the work that was given him to do, conjoined to its infinite efficacy and merit, He is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through him. But, assuming that this part of our subject is clearly understood that Jesus Christ in dying was the substitute and surety of others, let us proceed to the chief point:—

II. For whom did Christ die? or, what the extent of his atoning work? Whatever view we may adopt as to this, the extent of the Atonement, it must, in some way or another, be in perfect harmony with a free and universal call to mankind sinners, and we believe it is the difficulty felt on this point which originated and keeps alive in the Church the error—the God-dishonouring error—of a universal atonement. Now what are the terms of the gospel call? If the Bible warranted me, or told me when preaching the gospel to say to every person "Jesus died for you," then manifestly the question is settled; the atonement is universal. But the Bible warrants no such thing. Preaching the gospel is not telling men that Christ died for them, but it is that He has died for sinners, and if we accept of him as a Saviour then we appropriate him as dying for us. In fact, in reality there is no atonement available for me till I believe. Of course,—as I shall shew, it is determined and fixed in the purpose of God, but as something with which I have to do, it is mine only when I accept. But to the point. We believe and hold a limited atonement, limited to the elect, to such as shall be saved. The Arminian holds a universal atonement extending to the lost as well as the saved. To shew the truth of the former and the falseness of the latter is now our task.

## PROOFS FOR LIMITED ATONEMENT.

(a) I might, assuming the truth of what I have in former lectures clearly shown, argue for a particular and definite atonement from the fact of God having from all eternity elected to everlasting life his people, and given them to the Saviour to be redeemed by him ; and so we find the inspired apostle linking these two things together " who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ! it is God that justifieth, who shall condemn ! it is Christ that died. So our Saviour "The father gave them (the sheep) and I lay down my life for the sheep." Surely it is trifling with the plainest principles of common sense to tell us that while Christ died for the elect, he died for others also ; that while he loved the Church and gave himself for it, he gave himself for others too. There would be no propriety in such expressions, no meaning—and we conclude, therefore, that when he poured forth his soul unto death, it was for those whom the father had given him. (2) But we argue it from his intercession. In that prayer, in different forms of expression, does he expressly limit his supplication. " I pray for them, I pray not for the world : for their sakes, I sanctify myself." Surely the Redeemer would pray for all for whom he shed his blood ; oh surely, every one whose sins he bore in his own body on the tree would be remembered, and not excluded in his intercession ! Had he purchased the whole world of men by his death—as men speak—would he, now, foolishly, that the price is paid, cast away a portion of his purchase ? The thing is absurd, and were there no other proof than this alone, it would abundantly demonstrate, that his atonement was particular and limited.

(c) I stated that the discussion as to the extent of the atonement resolves itself at last into one as to its nature. If the Redeemer was our surety, if he took our law place, then assuredly all for whom he died shall be saved ; but all are not saved ; therefore, Christ did not bear the sins of all. If there be any sophistry in that argument, I cannot see it ; it seems to me to be insuperable and clear, and the tendency of denying it is to drive men into Pelagian and Socinian views as to the atonement itself.



But look at a few of the insuperable objections to a universal Atonement. (a) It makes the Saviour lay down his life for souls already in perdition. Surely the wildest Arminian will admit that during the 4000 years that preceded the coming of Christ many perished—of the inhabitants of the old world destroyed by the flood, of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Pharaohs and the Jesebels, the Ahabs and the Jeroboams. Did the Saviour die for them? Can any man in his sober senses, and exercising the judgment God has given us, to support a theory, dare to attribute such folly, such madness to the Son of God? The mind recoils in terror from such a thought—and if he did not die for those who perished, previous to his dying, why should he for those who shall perish subsequent to the event? Are God's purposes and ways of acting altered or modified by reference to the past, the present, or the future? No, "he sees all things at one view," and "known unto him are all his works from the beginning of the world." Every event in time and eternity is now and ever has been present to the Divine mind, and to allege that He died to effect ends which the determinate purpose and foreknowledge of God had determined should be otherwise, is to charge God with folly and the Son of God with utter lack of power.

(b) A universal atonement, with its accompanying doctrine, leaves it entirely dependent on the will of man whether any, by the atonement, shall be saved at all. It is, on this theory, a mere peradventure and uncertainty whether the tears, agonies and blood of Jesus Christ shall result in any good whatever; there is no certain seed given to Messiah in which he sees of the travail of his soul, but all is left to the veriest contingency.

Can we reconcile that even with the wisdom of God? Can we think the purpose which he purposed in himself in eternity, the stupendous means used, the mission and death of Christ—that all this should be done without the certainty that one solitary soul would thereby be saved? Would even a wise man act in such a manner? Would he expend treasure and life on a mere perhaps, on an issue which might, or might not, be realized? Verily not; and yet we are asked to believe that of God when we are told "He died for every



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one in general and for no one in particular." Universal atonement! It is no atonement. It makes the Redeemer pay the debt, and yet it is exacted from the debtor all the same. It represents him as suffering for criminals to free them after their sentence has been carried into execution. It charges the God of wisdom with using means, and oh, such means, on an enterprise the issue of which was mere uncertainty.

True, Arminians talk a great deal about the impartiality of their theory, its great benevolence and wide spread goodness, but this is more in appearance than in reality. We fear not to put the question on this ground, (tho' it is ground we have no right to take) where is the greater love, in securing by atonement the salvation of a great multitude, which no man can number, or in offering salvation to all and securing it to none? Which shows most strongly the mercy of God, infallibly to secure the salvation of millions, or to make provision for all, but make it certain in no case? We fearlessly put the case even on grounds of their own choosing and leave it to the unbiased judgment of all.

From the plain teaching of scripture, then, as well as from the nature of the case, we conclude that the Atonement was particular and definite, and that those for whom the Saviour died were chosen in him from before the foundation of the world.

#### ARMINIAN OBJECTIONS.

(1) Limited Atonement inconsistent with universal call—on this already—but was the offer free for 4000 years? *Suppose Atonement postponed*, and what advantage to tell me of atonement which fails to accomplish?

(2) Terms "all men," &c. (1) Consider the transition state of the church: "Universal terms were naturally used of the extension of the gospel to the nations generally, instead of the circumscribed range of the Jewish people;" or (2) "All men"—means all without without distinction, not without exception. It is men indefinitely—as regards the proclamations and invitations—"The grace of God hath appeared to all men" (Tit. ii. 11)—that is, hath gone forth under a general commission: to preach to any and all—all

are welcome, whatever may be their nationality; whatever their former character.

(3) In such passages as Rom. xiv. 15—"Destroy not thy brother for whom Christ died," men are described according to their profession; the secret purpose is known to God only: even the Apostles, while they address churches as saints, do not proceed on the certainty that all the members of those churches were such. "Destroy not him for whom Christ died"—is, as if he had said, Beware of a line of conduct which tends to counteract the Gospel, in leading to ruin some whom it seeks to save. Actions are judged by their tendency. So—if persons really "brethren beloved" tho' weak in faith, really in Christ, were made to stumble by the uncharitableness of stronger brethren, these last should feel that they were, so far as that was possible, counteracting what Christ had effected for them.

## SPEECH IN SYNOD AT HAMILTON,

JUNE 1869.

Rev. W. T. Murdoch, of Galt, said that he felt that great apology was required from him for seeming boldness in coming before the fathers and brethren associated with him in this dissent and complaint, who, from years and experience, were far better fitted to give the Synod a clear understanding of the whole case than himself; but, from being, through circumstances he need not now narrate, unwillingly thrust to the foreground in the discussions in the Presbytery, his brethren would not permit him, and he did not greatly desire it, to alter his relative position before this Court. He must, too, crave, at the outset, the kind indulgence of the Court for any imperfections in style or manner, as addressing the Synod, he might say, for the first time. He would utterly recoil from the task allotted him, did he not know that, to a young member like himself, that indulgence would be extended, and did he not feel that the cause they advocated—Church order and the rights of the people—was so strong that it could afford to be very inadequately pleaded and yet command their approbation. What very much added to the difficulty of their (the appellants') position was the fact which, doubtless, would be pleaded earnestly and well by the Presbytery in reply, that, dissenting, as they had done, from the finding of the Court below, they seemed placing themselves in antagonism to a revival of religion, they were throwing obstacles in the way of a work of God. That they here wished distinctly, emphatically, to disavow. They yielded to none in their desire and anxiety that God would "arise and plead His own cause," and give us times of refreshing from His presence and from the glory of His power. But they believed that He would do this by His own appointed ordinance, and that He would send the rod of His strength out of Zion—not

into Zion from somewhere without his Church—by which the Redeemer will subdue the people under him.

He would briefly narrate the history of the movement out of which the whole matter had arisen. In September last, a young man named Douglas Russell visited Galt, on his way, as he said, to Chicago. He had been identified in some way with revival meetings in Scotland, and before coming to Galt he (the speaker) understood he had addressed some week-day meetings in this city. He thoughtlessly, he confessed, asked him to give his people an account of these revival meetings in Scotland, believing it would be interesting to the people to hear of them. He found, however, that his manner of stating the stupendous work of our blessed Lord—the nature of saving faith—the grounds on which full assurance of being in a state of grace rested—were so expressed as to vary from our received doctrines on these points. The excitement began to increase; many were attracted by what some called a new Gospel; he and his fellow-labourers held meetings every day—Sabbath and all—in Knox's Church, and, as is known to the whole Court, these were kept up during the entire winter.

The attention of the Presbytery was directed to the movement by a complaint from members of our Church, which complaint was dismissed, and the minister complained against acquitted by the Presbytery of the charges. A committee was then appointed to visit Galt, to enquire into the origin, progress, and present state of religion there. That Committee did its work, gave in a unanimous Report, and on that Report, in the March meeting of the Presbytery, a finding was arrived at after a whole day's discussion and prayerful deliberation, which amongst other things, adopted generally the findings of the Committee. At its next meeting the Presbytery reconsidered the finding, and by a large majority deleted it from their record, and, beginning again *de novo* on the Report of the Committee, passed the resolution, as the finding of the Presbytery on the whole matter, against which we are here complaining. The Synod would observe that in the Committee's Report, there is the distinct allegation of statements having been made at variance with

the Word of God, statements Arminian in their nature or tending to Arminianism. That portion of the Report the Presbytery by their finding utterly ignore, make no reference to it, and suggest no remedy for it. They see good and only good, and in what we held to be culpable indifference, overlook the agencies employed in the work, and the natural results that must follow from such agencies, in loose views of the truth and the reproaching of the Ministry as an ordinance of God. The complainers on the other hand affirm and maintain that this unsettling of the faith of many arose directly out of, and was necessarily connected with, the preaching of those who profess no creed, who act under the control of no Church, and who, as all history abundantly testifies to be the invariable issue of such things, produced the impression that Church creeds were getting obsolete, and something fresh in that way is needed for this advanced age. Unwilling, however, to do anything more than what was absolutely needed in the circumstances to protect their people, they were content to re-affirm what they had in their ordination vow promised to maintain, assert, and defend; viz: this amongst other principles, "That none are to preach the Gospel but such as are sufficiently gifted, and duly approved, or called to this office," and to refer the interpretation of what this means to this Court of ultimate reference. Not that they admitted for a moment that the language quoted from the standards admits of more than one meaning;—they, as a Church, happily took their standards to mean just what they say;—but in order to remove the issue away from strong local feelings which had arisen, to convince the brethren who did not see in this any obstacle to their employing such unrecognized agents, and to settle on a broader and more unmistakable foundation the decision of the question, they moved that this Court be asked to give the ministers and Kirk Sessions direction in the premises. Was it too much to ask the Presbytery in view of the conflicting opinions held by those competent to judge—ten ministers involved in the movement, and approving of it, and five ministers looking on with so much of suspicion and fear as to prevent their taking any part, in view of the fact that a large and intelligent number of their



members condemned it as utterly irregular and resulting in the most calamitous effects—was it, he asked, too much to move that the Presbytery instead of calling it “a gracious work,” as they did, should simply deem it premature to give any deliverance as to this part of the question? They (the appellants) held not, and were there to complain to this Synod against their being permanently committed to the approval of a movement in which they had not confidence, and in which, as the official report of the Committee says, there mingled so much of evil.

The second part of the amendment rejected by the Presbytery first affirmed a fact which all admitted, and then stated that they held such to be contrary to the standards. Was this not true? He had not yet met with an individual who affirmed the contrary. A faint attempt was made at an explanation of Question 158, which would make it mean that the only qualification and call there meant was that from God, attested by fruits following their labours; and that the call of the Church was not meant to be included. That was so preposterously astray that no other member of the Presbytery reiterated it; that would be the doctrine of the Plymouth Brethren; and would, if adopted, ultimately end in the extinction of the Church as a divinely instituted association altogether. It was mooted, he believed, by some that the catechism is not part of our standards at all—only the confession. The admission would not alter the question much, as he thought it could easily be shown that the language of the confession is as decisive, if not quite so pointed. But to pass over this, which could surely only be the resort of a weak cause, the second section of their basis of union reads:—“That the Westminster Confession, with the larger and shorter Catechisms, are the standards” \* \* \* But it was urged, that while the standards did teach the principle for which they contended, that considerable latitude must be given to the practical carrying out of them; that they are intended more to affirm great principles and lay down general rules, and that consequently we are not tightly to adhere to them in every particular. A more dangerous principle than that could scarcely be conceived under cover of such a plea. What doctrine, usage, or prin-

ciple, would be safe? He merely stated this. It would be insulting the intelligence of this Court to dwell on it. They saw the effects of such a mode of reasoning in another Church, where, under this plea, there exists the wonderful mixture, "a Calvinistic creed and an Arminian clergy." If there was anything in their standards which fettered the free action of their Church, which proves a barrier or a hindrance to the successful on-carrying of the work of God, the only true escape from the difficulty, the only course left them, was not to retain the law and yet systematically violate it, but to change the law—not to break the regulation, but agitate for its repeal. And what of the conscientious convictions of those who adhere to these as their understanding of the Word of God? You place us as students at the feet of revered Professors, who inculcate certain principles. We hear from their lips, as some of us lately had the joy of hearing from our revered Principal of Knox College, the argument for the very principle here involved. You lay us by an ordination vow—the most solemn of all vows before God—under the obligation "to maintain, assert, and defend these to the utmost of our power;" and when we do so, when in the mildest possible form we ask the Presbytery of Guelph to satisfy our consciences by reiterating the principle, and refer for farther advice to this Court, we are refused even this reference, and instead forced to accept of a deliverance which touches not the question at all; and in substance, though not in words, we are to console ourselves with the plea that the "work is a gracious work," and must not be rudely interfiged with. To say that it was "a work of grace" was merely begging the question. Of that being the case, they only had evidence of the most conflicting kind; and even if it were so, if it could be shown that amid all the confusion and strife, the envy, malice and evil speaking, the God of Peace had been working, and in the exercise of His sovereignty, was bringing men out of darkness into marvellous light; what then? Say that the end justified the means! No: but take it as a rebuke to ourselves for lack of zeal, and let it prompt us to a more diligent use of His own appointed means, secured that in and through these we may

expect His blessing. It was felt by some to be inopportune to discuss this question at present, that they should wait till the full result of it was seen before interfering in any way. He could not think of any time so pressing as the present for a faithful testimony to be borne by the Church, to the rights of her great King in appointing to, or withdrawing from, and controlling in all the exercise of the ministry of the Word. That the Church has from Him the authority, and is placed under the responsibility of feeding His Church—was the great principle which lies at the root of all Church order, which in all the history of the Church, in both its branches, has been steadily adhered to. It formed one of the very principles of the Disruption of '43, that the Church in her constituted authorities should send those who are to shepherd the flock, and could not commit the care of souls to others, whether self-appointed or sent by earthly persons. He held that this was the time to vindicate this principle, and permit none to do the shepherd's work who had climbed up some other way;—a time when this country seems invaded by an army of—he had almost said—religious adventurers, some avowedly Plymouth Brethren, ridiculing, as he was told they did in the chief city of this Province, anything like ordination to the ministry—others, such as they had in Galt, disowning any sect at all, claiming to belong to all, and hold communion with all, but all acting on the same principle and re-echoing the one cry, "We need no holy hands laid on us; we need no commission from men—we have our commission from God on high": Nay more, declaring, and apparently supported in their position by some who should know better, that to be identified with any denomination would lessen their influence and weaken their power. Ah! if that were true, they were all wrong. They should, if that be so, renounce Presbyterianism, if being Presbyterians lessened their influence for good in the cause of the Master: That, in other words, religious denominations should all lapse into one, by abandoning the distinctive creeds that keep them apart; and on the simple ground of being converted, Arminians and Calvinists, Baptists and Presbyterians, all the sects and denominations form one loving brotherhood.

The Synod would bear in mind that the practice against which they complained was not lay preaching *per se*. This Church recognises such labourers. Many of them as students had preached, but they did so under the authority and control of the Church, and the quasi license, at least the imprimatur of the Presbytery—that was one thing. This was another and a very different thing. They were told, and the argument, if it may be so called, seemed to weigh with the Presbytery, that every person is to work for Christ, if he has a hand, to use it for Christ, a mouth, to speak for Christ, if means, use them for Christ. That was all true, he thought. The first question of the Shorter Catechism affirms something like that, that our chief end is to glorify God—that we are to glorify Him with our bodies and spirits: but we are to glorify our blessed Saviour, not by will worship or will service, but by honouring his ordinances, and doing what is incumbent on us in the station in which by his Providence we are placed. As the Quaker said of the book that was given him to review, they might say of this line of argument, "What is true in it is not now, and what is new is not true." If a young man was by God's grace brought to flee to Jesus for salvation; if in the o'ergushing of his gratitude to His now beloved Saviour, he cannot but devote himself to His service as a preacher; the door is open; the Church needs workmen; her constant prayer "O Lord of the harvest—the harvest is great, the labourers few, do." Let him enter by the door, let him apply to our Presbyteries, and in exceptional cases exceptional courses will be taken, and then with the call of God attested and acknowledged by those whom God has set for the purpose, he goes forth a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. If the process seemed to such too tedious, if impatience to preach cannot bide, then he might rest assured the Divine call is not to the formal preaching of the Word, else it would also have been to the means to qualify him for it; and men and women (for both sexes preach now) could glorify God in many other ways than trying to preach before they were sent. It would be presumption, indeed, for him to enter into Scripture argument for Church control over those who taught their people the whole counsel of God. It was so under the old



economy ; it was so under the new. Elders were ordained in every city. The head of the church did not leave it without a constitution—not entering, it was true, into every detail of church polity and government, but containing general principles sufficiently clear, which if carried out would preserve the fold from false teachers, and supply to his people in all time the faithful teaching of the Word. He gave some apostles ; and some prophets ; and some evangelists ; and some pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of his saints and for the work of the ministry. He was sure it would surprise the fathers and brethren to hear that when on one occasion he quoted this passage, and inadvertently omitted the term “ Evangelists ” ; hold was taken of the omission as if the wandering preachers amongst us came under that category. True, indeed, they claimed the name Evangelist, but, alas, they had none of the qualifications. Evangelists were ordained men, sent, among other things, to ordain. Thus, like Timothy, they had the gift of the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, and they doubtless magnified that aspect of their office, and not like those who clothe themselves in these days with their name—as the Greek warrior arrayed himself in the armour of Achilles—they are not the same. To fortify his position he might quote largely from many authors, both dead and living ; he would quote first from Dr. Owen, who was sometimes appealed to as if otherwise minded. Dr. Owen had written, that if to be gifted or to fancy oneself such, were to be called, then any one might take it upon him to preach, in his own mere imagination. Nay, if this were allowed, the sort of persons who would mostly come forward to preach would be precisely those in whom the Christian grace of humility was least developed. If the Lord Jesus Christ was the God of order, he had left his church to no such confusion. He also read the following from the *Canada Presbyterian Record*, being part of Rev. Principal Willis’ address to the students of Knox College, Toronto, a month or two ago :—“ There is but one passage in the New Testament that with the least plausibility, as it appears to us, can be brought in justification of the idea that to teach and preach belongs to all Christian disciples ; and indeed no one denies that both by his life, and by one of

private conversation, every Christian may preach, or spread the good tidings. It is said (Acts viii) that they who were scattered abroad on the persecution about Stephen went everywhere preaching the word. We rather think that some in reading this passage, do not advert to the fact that though universal terms are used in the first verse,—“They were all scattered abroad except the Apostles,”—it is not said in the fourth verse that all who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word; it is simply, “they who were scattered abroad.” And it is surely a good reason for taking this with limitation, that the very next verse again tells us that the dispersion brought Philip, a companion of Stephen, and one of the seven, to a city of Samaria; thither he went and preached Christ to them, performing miracles also. And only follow the narrative out; you find the instruction of the Ethiopian eunuch provided for by this same Philip being detached, and directed by the Spirit of God himself, to proffer his aid in the interpretation of the word of prophecy to the stranger. And yet, as illustrating still further our present position, the Apostles having once heard that Samaria had received the word of God, all is so done in order, that two of their own number are sent down by authority of the Apostolic College, to do what none less than Apostles could do,—impart the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Finally, our brief induction would not be complete without our noticing how the later books of Scripture are the most express in warning against erroneous teachers, and directing to make trial of “spirits;” and in the very closing book of the canon, we see, in the directions addressed to the angel of more than one church, that the constituted ecclesiastical authorities are reckoned with as charged with the responsibility of suffering or prohibiting others to teach. It were a very unworthy aim, were we to insist on such a subject only for the sake of magnifying spiritual offices. Our desire that the work of evangelists be well done is so much stronger than any jealousy we feel that any part of the work should be done by others, that we would gladly say,—Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets! if, on any fair reading of the law and testimony in the first place, and any fair consulting with the teachings of history, we could see that good



has resulted from the adoption of the principle of lay preaching. But, from the spirit in which a standing ministry is often decried, and the very general association of this cry with a mutilated Gospel; or a defective exhibition of the truth, we feel warranted in still insisting on the necessity of a regular course of preparation for those who are to handle the mysteries of the kingdom, or mould the religious opinions of their fellow-men. And if, as it is pleasing to know, sects, which are supposed to have discarded learning, are after all applying themselves to correct the mistakes of their predecessors, or, as may be the case, to supply what these had less opportunity, though willing, to provide, it is hoped that we need not so very laboriously defend a position which few venture very deliberately to assail, as rather turn an eye inward upon ourselves, enquiring whether the power of the pulpit might not be more effectively worked; whether by anything wanting in the matter or manner of our preaching we may not be hindering the gospel, or diluting and impoverishing the spiritual aliment which is designed to nourish and perfect living souls." He apologized again for occupying so much of their valuable time, and hoped that the Synod would not lay this matter aside on any technical form; that they would give forth to the Church a clear and certain sound, and calm the fears of many of their best children, who, if these things continued, might be driven to extremities calamitous to the Church. He had read the other day an extract from an address of Henry Ward Beecher, who wields such influence on this continent, in which it was said that if any man felt he had a call from God to go forth preaching and baptizing, he should do so. That was the danger to which we were now exposed, the dark cloud that was drifting over our land. Sometime in the winter, a writer in the *Record*, in the exuberance of his poetic thought, spoke of a cloud charged with many blessings being at present overhanging the land, and needing only our prayers and zeal to press it to pour down on us blessings till there be not room enough to receive them. A very beautiful thought and a true one! that cloud was there, and all of them desirous of such an outpouring, should gird themselves to more earnestness to seek the happy consummation: but let us be-

were of another cloud that was now lying there too, charged with very different elements, which by an unwise decision of this Court on the question, by anything like temporising expediency, or hesitating dread to deal with it, may be pierced, and fill our beloved Church with confusion and disorder, dissatisfaction and woe. He had exhausted their patience—one word and he had done. They all sought revival—every prayer they prayed, every sermon they preached, was directed to that; and it was by seeking more earnestness in their closets, more faithfulness in their families, more earnestness and zeal in the pulpit, that they might expect their Zion to rise and shine—"Fair as the moon, and clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

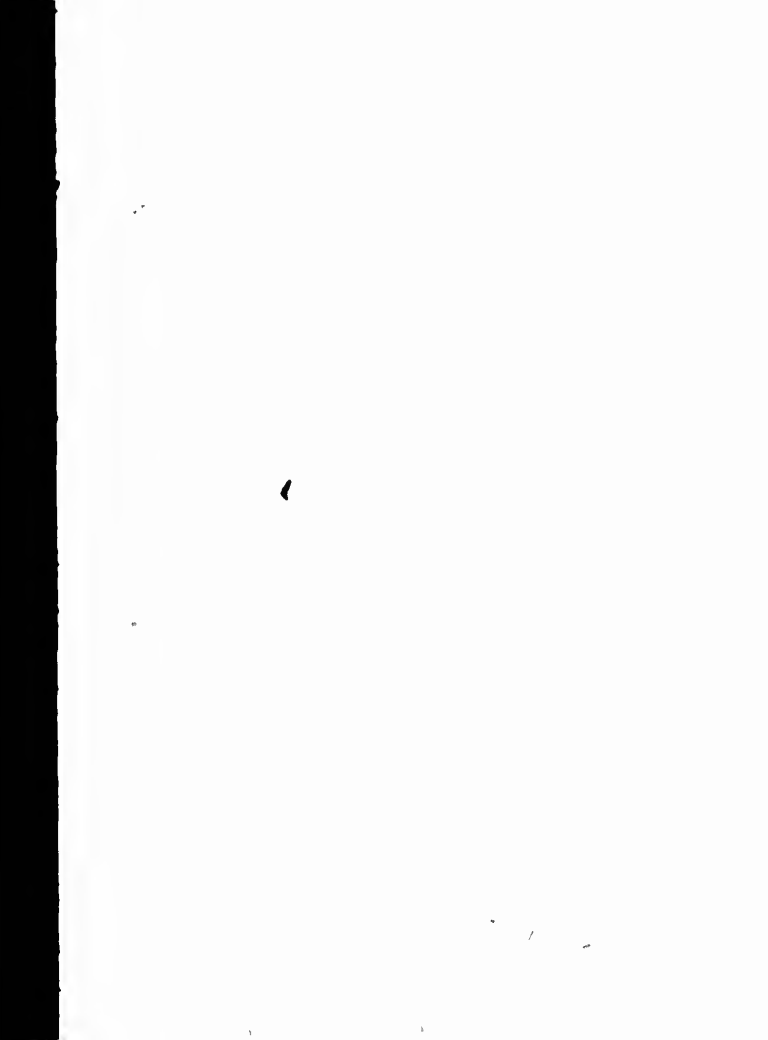
## (FUNERAL) SERMON,

BY REV. DR. WILLIS;

PREACHED IN MELVILLE CHURCH, GAIT, ON SABBATH THE  
20TH JANUARY, 1870.

2 Cor. iv. 7.—*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power, &c.—with Gal. ii. 6: As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith as ye have been taught, &c.*

The Apostle in these words addressed to the Corinthians, magnifies his calling; or meets and obviates certain prejudices against the gospel, founded on the humble circumstances of its preachers. He had already claimed for his doctrine the honourable appellation of the "word of God." He had styled it the glorious gospel, owned by the Divine Spirit as the chosen means of the soul's saving illumination,—the very power and wisdom of God. Of such a gospel, the object of so deep interest to heaven and earth—yea, and hell, (for, its light the god of this world labours, he had just said, to intercept,) might not the agents be expected to be some higher order of beings, or, if men, men accredited by more unmistakable tokens of Divine protection and favour? But what do we see instead? They were "in deaths often," in poverty, in reproaches, persecutions, tumults—most of them illiterate, and the very Apostle of the Gentiles himself in bodily presence weak, and in speech contemptible! Yet, God's thoughts are not as man's:—the very weakness of God is stronger than man, and the foolishness of God wiser than men. Not the less precious, says the Apostle, is the jewel, that the casket is rude or unsightly. We may be poor, but we have in trust, and in our charge, that which makes many rich; and it redounds the more to the glory of God, that by an instrumentality so unlikely ends so invaluable are accomplished, and spiritual triumphs won for Him, who maketh manifest the



savour of his knowledge by us in every place. "We are persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed—bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body."

The gospel, then, is here called a *Treasure*; let us see why?—its ministers *Earthen vessels*: let us consider the design of Divine wisdom in this arrangement, or how that design is subserved by it? And may the spirit of light and grace direct us!

I. "**TREASURE.**" Men give this name to what is very precious—often to what is rare also. Earth's treasures lie not on the surface; they are deep and secreted, often fetched from afar, searched for with toil. We read of the treasures of the snow and of the hail. It is demanded of man; Hast thou seen these? as if to intimate that they are far beyond human ken, and to chide the presumption that would bring the Almighty's ways within the range of human measurement.

"*This treasure.*"—The Apostle refers us back either to the immediately preceding verse, in which he speaks of the glory of God, as most fully beheld in the face of Jesus Christ, a glory of which he had himself experienced the internal and affecting manifestation—"He hath shined in our hearts;" or, he may be referring us to the preceding chapter, where he names the gospel the ministration of life, in contrast with the law as the ministry of death; and the ministration of righteousness in contrast with the condemnation by the law: the gospel bringing righteousness nigh—finding that for us of which the law only reveals the necessity. Nor is the gospel less the ministration of the Spirit than of righteousness, while we behold in it, as in a mirror, with unveiled face, the glory of God, changing us into his own image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

No wonder he calls the gospel a treasure, if these are its provisions!—Precious it is, and in the highest sense enriching. It is the disclosure of a purpose hidden in the mind of God, exceeding all conceptions of reason; "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard." Human wisdom had exhausted its devices, and the world by wisdom knew not God, when it

pleased God by the "foolishness of preaching" to save them that believe. During long years, rare indeed was the treasure: He showed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments to Israel: He had not dealt so with any nation. Now he would shew unto the ages to come the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. Yet how many within the range of christian light shut their eyes to this glory!—blinded by the god of this world, as the context declares, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them." Yes: the gospel treasure is thus still rare and precious, albeit abundant—exceeding abundant. The possessors of these riches are not so much envied as they are unknown, "Whom," says the Saviour, speaking of the Comforter, and the precious blessing of his indwelling presence,— "whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Rich indeed they are who possess such a treasure! the wealth of Sheba, what is it to this! Here are the unsearchable riches of Christ, which the great Redeemer himself became poor to enrich us withal. Here are the durable riches and righteousness which He—the personal wisdom of God—disposes from his hand;—the gold tried in the fire which, with the white raiment, and eye salve, he urges us to receive; "the true riches" adapted to every human want, and filling every capacity—satisfying without sating. This is what all other treasures, the vastest that earth can yield, have failed to do. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity," (Ecc. 5.) The conqueror of the world—it is said—sat down and wept, because he had not another world to conquer. Especially, how incompetent is all the good of earth to still the unquiet conscience! To the mind awakened to inquire, How shall I come before the Lord! we may say of all that earthly ambition can compass what Solomon says of him that singeth songs to a heavy heart. But, this is a treasure that enters the heart itself; it adorns the soul, the hidden man in that which is not corruptible; Other riches are without us, are separable from us: if they take not wings and leave us,



we must leave them: it is certain we can carry nothing hence. Here is a treasure interwoven with the invading spirit; which abides, when the world and the lust thereof passeth away. Not hid in man alone: it is hid with Christ in God; the moth or rust cannot consume it; the thief cannot steal it; the fire of affliction or persecution can but refine it. In short, hear the commendation of these spiritual treasures by the giver of them himself: "Riches and honours are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment: that I may come those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill all their treasures." (Prov. 8.)

II. The instrumentality for dispensing these treasures, and God's design in the employment of means that seem inadequate: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels." Something is here, he would say, worthy of angels to bear; yet, it is committed to us frail mortal creatures, men of like passions with yourselves. Probably, too, he vindicates his apostolic authority, and that of his companions, disparaged in the eyes of many, by their humble qualifications, and their sufferings. Not the less—says he—but the more does God magnify his own power by us. It is but in harmony with his ways: he will stain the pride of all glory. He will make more apparent by the very contrast between the feebleness of the instrument and the grandeur of the result, the working of his own unseen presence. Doubtless, the wisdom and condescension of God are to be recognized in thus committing the treasure to earthen vessels; for His approach to us might have been by a ministry like that at Sinai, overpowering by its splendour: so that like the Israelites we might have feared to tread the sacred ground, and trembled as we listened to the voice of words. But especially does he manifest the "excellency of the power," in the production of effects to which no created power is equal. How constantly was this sentiment of his insufficiency present to the mind of the apostle! Who is Paul, says he, and who is Apollon, but ministers by whom ye be-

blood, even as the Lord gave to every man? "Neither is he that glorieth anything; neither he that vaunteth." It were a wrong use of Paul's words, to infer that he despised human qualifications for the service of Christ in the Gospel; as if any may be a vessel fit for the master's use, who chooses to take on him the preacher's function. Paul is careful to tell us of the solemn call and appointment of himself and others. He hath "committed to us the word of reconciliation." "He hath set some in the church—  
 Teachers." Neither would it be a reasonable use of the apostle's words to deny learning on the strength of these, or to hold as of little moment whether natural gifts, or the acquirements of human education. The very case of Paul supplies an argument in the contrary direction, in favour of seeking the best qualifications both of nature and of grace. Even Paul, gifted as he was with inspiration, who may not see that the accomplishments of human learning served him in the work he was called to? Who can doubt that his having sat at the feet of Gamaliel contributed to his power of reasoning, in after days, with the men of the Synagogue; and that his residence at Tarsus, a place notable for resort of Greeks, and converse with the Grecian literature, prepared him for his encounters at Athens with the philosophers of the Porch and of the Forum? But, his meaning is, that at the best, no human power, no power but that of Him who caused light to arise out of darkness, can effectually convince and convert men, or extricate them from Satan's yoke. What can the best skill of ratiocination, or the embellishments of earthly eloquence, avail to make the dead live? Gifts these are, we say again, not to be despised; yea, even to be coveted: and never more worthily used than when consecrated to the service of Christ. Still, at best, we are but earthen vessels, says Paul: our power, like that of the man who encompassed Jericho, is in what we bear. The walls of the devoted city fall not before the power or prowess of Israel! no sword was drawn; no engine planted; no mount raised: But, the ark of the Lord was there! Or, we are like Gideon's handful before the countless army of Midian. God would manifest how entirely the victory was of himself. In these interesting words, he addresses the Israelites

leader: "The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vent themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me." The thirty thousand are first reduced to ten thousand; Again the Lord says, "The people are yet too many." Gideon is directed to detail three hundred for the appointed service; and, with none of the usual implements of war, with no equipments more formidable than empty pitchers, and burning lamps—simply at the breaking of these earthen vessels, and at the trumpet's sound—it was given to this chosen few to see the gathered hosts retire in consternation before them! No unmet symbol this, of the Gospel conquests, especially in the apostolic time: Before these humble heralds of the cross, accounted by the wise of this world fools—and willing to be counted fools for Christ's sake; armed only with the sword of the Spirit, the word of God; charged with a message which flattered no human pride, nor pandered to any earthly passion; preaching a Gospel which required in those who embraced it the renunciation of all self-righteous ideas, and exposed its confessors to peril of every earthly interest: Who could suppose that Satan's strongholds should yield before such an unlikely agency, or that men should ever be tempted, even in ridicule, to say, These are they who have turned the world upside down? Yet, arrayed in the panoply of righteousness—the Spirit of God working with them: behold thousands in one day embracing the truth, and hastening to confess the crucified one; priests becoming obedient to the faith; heathen temples forsaken; oracles struck dumb; and at length proud imperial Rome stooping to offer obeisance at the shrine of a religion it had for ages barely tolerated, or fiercely persecuted!

I pass from this text, to add a few remarks on the Scripture I read along with it. It will serve as, in a sort, a practical application of our subject. That passage also, like the one just explained, commends to us the precious Gospel, and especially suggests what its very preciousness should enforce—a careful discrimination between a true faith and a false; a temporary and abiding one; a speculative faith, and one that can bear to be tested by its fruits:

The chapter where these words are found, and also the preceding chapter, are in finest keeping with the passages already commented on :

Here are the spiritual riches again : Christ for man—  
man—ye, in them, the hope of glory. And what a spirit of earnestness breathes in these words, "I would that ye knew what conflict I have for you!" But, summarily to illustrate :—

First of all, let the Apostle's definition of faith be observed. It is not only a believing about Christ, but it is receiving him as he is offered in the Gospel, and for all the purposes for which he is offered. For, what else is the design of describing so fully the object of faith—*Christ Jesus the Lord!*—names suggestive of his glorious person, his office, his fulness. Faith unites to Jesus ; it is the bond of union with himself, as wrought in us by his own Spirit, and is our means of communion with Him in his benefits. See how constantly, both by the master, and by the servants, it is presented in this light! "Every branch in me," says Jesus, "that beareth fruit"—"he that eateth me shall live by me." "Of Him," says Paul, "are ye in Christ Jesus." And Paul's brief formula here of *receiving Christ Jesus the Lord*, is explained by his prayer elsewhere, "to be found in Him." Consequent on this union, is communion with Him in all the blessings of grace (see 1 Cor. i. 30—or Phil. 3): It is the tenure by which all is held.

But—secondly—observe how he enjoins the cultivation of this communion, and holy conformity to Christ in godly living. "Walk in Him"—an engaging description of all new obedience. It is a walking in Christ ; a walking under the power of Gospel inducements, a so living by the faith of the Son of God as to have our life and converse thoroughly moulded by these new influences. He who is in Christ "is a new creature."

And so—thirdly—it seems suggested that, by a reciprocal influence, our growing conformity to Christ will strengthen and invigorate faith : "rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught." "They act and react on each other : our faith on our holiness ; our holiness on our faith—confirming it—or enabling us to act



the assurance of hope to the assurance of faith. How expressive this language,—“rooted in him, built up in him!” It sounds of encouragement even to weak faith; to the trembling, doubting soul: It suggests faith may be real though weak; it beckons you on—bids you keep near to the fountain of grace; to draw life, more life from your root. It sounds of warning also: Be not deceived; be not satisfied with a loose hold of the great object of faith; weak increase; seek establishment. Faith may be increased, it has been well said, extensively and intensively; in the first sense by a growing knowledge and apprehension of the truths of the Gospel: thus the Apostle prays for these Galatians that they may have all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, even the Father, and of Christ:—in the second, by increase, from the Spirit of faith, of faith itself. For, as it is no mere thing of man—this faith; but a work of the power of God—yes the mighty power of God: so is it not less by that power it is nurtured and perfected. Hear the Apostle again—how he prays for grace of faith to those who already had the faith (Eph. 3)—“For this I bow my knees unto the Father—; that he would grant you according to his riches in glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth (how human language seems to sink under conscious inadequacy to express the great thought!) and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God.”

And one thing more would I detain you with: the apostle's solicitude that they should hold fast the form of sound words; or, continue in the truth as they had been taught. He would they should be able to give a reason of their hope. Religion seeks no blind faith: far less looks with approval on a changing and versatile spirit, ready to be turned to and fro—carried around with every wind of doctrine. Having proved all things, hold fast that which is good: The truth once known—once found; “buy it and sell it not”—says the wise man—continue in the faith as ye have

been taught—be zealous, not merely as wedded to his earthly teacher, but to the heavenly; having received the doctrine on his own evidence—cherish it, love it—rejoice in it: let it engage your heart against fear—against worldly solicitude—against the wiles of Satan. Let it cause you to abound in thanksgiving.

It but remains that I embrace the opportunity, in closing this my discourse, to sympathize with a bereaved congregation on the loss of a dear Pastor, and join with them in their high appreciation of the privilege they possessed—also for so short a time—in so intelligent an expounder of the Gospel, and so earnest a defender of the truth. The care of Providence has often been remarked in placing men in spheres where, beyond what was foreseen, there may come to be occasion for the exercise of their particular gifts of power.

I have pleasure in remembering the assiduity and success with which your late Pastor applied himself to sacred study, in preparation for the Holy Ministry. I saw in him powers of clear logical discrimination. He was not the man to be deceived by the plausible pretensions of error; nor to shrink from the painful, and as it might seem, invidious duty of exposing it: yet I do not believe in these his efforts he set down aught in malice. I can testify to his great candour. I had opportunity of hearing his views in private; he desired to speak the truth in love; and I think no one could have heard his pleadings on the floor of the late Synod, without being favourably impressed both with his ability and with his modesty. There was no air of presumption—no self-seeking—no harshness to others in his language. It is not a little creditable to one so comparatively youthful to have borne so good a testimony for valuable principles.

These principles are what are usually called the doctrines of grace. They are what have been long cherished by the wisest and best of our countrymen; and it is doubtless to their being well indoctrinated in these that we are to ascribe much of the depth of the piety of former generations, and their steady resistance of possible novelties, which now and again have come on the surface and unsettled less vigorous christians. Nor need the defender of these doctrines ever



the appeal to the history of revivals in any age, as to whether the exhibition of a full gospel has helped or hindered vital godliness. A Tophaty and a Boston in the old world, and an Edwards in the new, are witnesses that to the realising of a gracious work on an extended scale, there is no need to hide even the more transcendental doctrines of our faith, or bring them down to the level of carnal prejudices. "Every word of God is pure;" we may not add to it nor diminish. What presumption in the very thought! For, we are incompetent judges of the mutual relations of truth, or the effect which the less welcome parts of our message are designed and adapted to exert on the human mind; and, recurring for a moment to the key word of our text—"The treasure in earthen vessels"—does not that name or description of what is committed to us forbid the preaching of the Gospel by halves? Will men in ordinary concerns bear that a custodian of treasures, who is only the agent or channel of transmission, shall withhold at pleasure any part of another's appropriations? Suppose he were to say, Be content; you have enough; the abundance may be unsafe for you. May he thus tamper with his trust? You would insist on knowing all—seeing all. Yet, too often, when men thus deal with the heavenly riches, people, yea crowds of people, love to have it so; and when a man, a guardian of the truth, shall refuse to go into compromising courses, how hardly shall he obtain credit for his conscientiousness! how many shall seek for every paltry motive to which to ascribe his zeal!

It rejoices me to know that you of this congregation appreciated the labour and vigilance of your pastor as a watchman on the towers of Zion. The constancy of your attachment to him must have lightened his burdens; and I gladly recognise others besides his own flock, many here to-day, others not present—especially fellow labourers of various denominations,—who strengthened his hands by their sympathy of sentiment and feeling.

Let me comfort you, his mourning flock, by this, that though the earthly vessel is removed, "the treasure" remains. It is laid up in Christ primarily; it is, as has been said, hidden in the word: And, sure I am, that no tribute of your

respect for a beloved minister would rejoice his departed spirit so much as your abiding in the truth he taught you ; not simply holding it as opposed to error, but availing yourselves of it in its saving and sanctifying issues. Remember not only truths defended, but the precious salvation urged on your acceptance. Let your sorrowful emotions of to-day flow into profitable channels of piety. Be more earnest than ever in reading the word, in hearing the word, in wrestling for the blessing ; "If thou criest after knowledge and liftest up thy voice for understanding ; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure ; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and fill the knowledge of God." (Prov. ii.)



